



*Billing Code 3410-15

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

January 29, 2018

The Department of Agriculture has submitted the following information collection requirement(s) to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. Comments are requested regarding (1) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments regarding this information collection received by [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] will be considered.

Written comments should be addressed to: Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), New Executive Office Building, 725 – 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20502. Commenters are encouraged to submit their comments to OMB via email to: OIRA_Submission@OMB.EOP.GOV or fax (202) 395-5806 and to Departmental Clearance Office, USDA, OCIO, Mail Stop 7602, Washington, D.C. 20250-7602. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling (202) 720-8958.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number and the agency informs potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information that such persons are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Rural Utilities Service

TITLE: Accounting Requirements for RUS Electric and Telecommunications Borrowers

OMB CONTROL NUMBER: 0572-0003

SUMMARY OF COLLECTION: Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is a credit agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that makes loans (direct and guaranteed) to finance electric and telecommunications facilities in rural areas. This collection is primarily a recordkeeping requirement. 7 CFR parts 1767 and 1770 set forth basic accounting requirements for maintaining financial accounting records on an accrual basis that are unique to RUS borrowers. The agency is requiring borrowers to establish an index of records. RUS does not own or operate rural electric facilities. Its function is to provide, through self-liquidating loans and technical assistance, adequate and dependable electric and telecommunications service to rural people under rates and conditions that permit productive use of these utility services. RUS borrowers, as all businesses, need accounting systems for their own internal use as well as external use. Such records are maintained as part of normal business practices. Without systems, no records would exist, for example, of what they own or what they owe. Such records systems provide borrowers with information that is required by the manager and board of directors to operate on a daily basis, to complete their tax returns, and to support requests to state regulatory commissions for rate approvals.

NEED AND USE OF THE INFORMATION: Currently there are approximately 600 active electric borrowers and 350 RUS telecommunications borrowers. Borrowers may utilize any information technology that meets their records management needs. RUS uses the information

to evaluate a borrower's financial performance, to determine whether current loans are at risk, and to determine the credit worthiness of future loans. If basic financial records were not maintained, the borrower, its investors, and RUS would be unable to evaluate a borrower's financial performance, to determine whether current loans are at risk, and to determine the credit worthiness of future loans.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS: Business or other-for-profit; Not-for-profit institutions

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 950

FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES: Recordkeeping; Reporting: On Occasion

TOTAL BURDEN HOURS: 25,650

Rural Utilities Service

TITLE: 7 CFR Part 1724 and Part 1738 Electric Engineering, Architectural Services and Design Policies and Procedures; and Rural Broadband Access Loans and Loan Guarantees

OMB CONTROL NUMBER: 0572-0118

SUMMARY OF COLLECTION: The Rural Electrification Act of 1936, 7 U.S.C. 901 *et seq.*, as amended, authorizes Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to make loans in several States and Territories of the United States for broadband access and rural electrification and the furnishing and improving of electric energy to persons in rural areas. Title 7 CFR 1724 requires each borrower to select a qualified architect to perform certain architectural services and to use the designated form that provides for these services. The agency has developed standardized contractual forms used by borrowers to contract for services.

NEED AND USE OF THE INFORMATION: The information collected stipulates the parties to the agreement, contain certain information relating to the approved loan or loan guarantee, and

provide detailed contractual obligations and services to be provided and performed relating to construction, project design, construction management, compensation, and related information. The contractual forms provide standardized contract agreements between the electric or broadband borrower and the engineering or architectural firm providing services to the borrower. This has resulted in substantial savings to borrowers by reducing preparation of the documentation and the costly review by the government.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS: Business or other for-profit;

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 59

FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES: Reporting: On occasion

TOTAL BURDEN HOURS: 63

Ruth Brown
Departmental Information Collection Clearance Officer

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